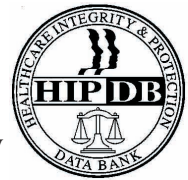




National Practitioner Data Bank Healthcare Integrity and Protection Data Bank

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FACT SHEET ON QUERY FEES

Background of the National Practitioner Data Bank and the Healthcare Integrity and Protection Data Bank

The National Practitioner Data Bank (NPDB) was established by Title IV of P.L. 99-660, *Health Care Quality Improvement Act of 1986*, as amended (Title IV). Final regulations governing the NPDB are codified at 45 CFR Part 60. Responsibility for NPDB implementation resides with the Bureau of Health Professions, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

Title IV is intended to improve the quality of health care by encouraging State licensing boards, hospitals, professional societies, and other health care entities to identify and discipline those who engage in unprofessional behavior; and to restrict the ability of incompetent physicians, dentists, and other health care practitioners to move from State to State without disclosure or discovery of previous medical malpractice payment and adverse action history. Adverse actions can involve licensure, clinical privileges, professional society membership, and exclusions from Medicare and Medicaid.

The Secretary of HHS, acting through the Office of Inspector General (OIG) and the U.S. Attorney General, was directed by the *Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996*, Section 221(a), Public Law 104-191, to create the Healthcare Integrity and Protection Data Bank (HIPDB) to combat fraud and abuse in health insurance and health care delivery. The HIPDB's authorizing statute is more commonly referred to as Section 1128E of the *Social Security Act*. Final regulations governing the HIPDB are codified at 45 CFR Part 61.

The HIPDB is a national data collection program for the reporting and disclosure of certain final adverse actions taken against health care practitioners, providers, and suppliers. The HIPDB collects information regarding licensure and certification actions, exclusions from participation in Federal and State health care programs, health care-related criminal convictions and civil judgments, and other adjudicated actions or decisions, as specified in the regulation.

The NPDB and the HIPDB are primarily alert or flagging systems intended to facilitate a comprehensive review of the professional credentials of health care practitioners, providers, and suppliers. Eligible entities should use the information contained in the NPDB and the HIPDB in conjunction with information from other sources when granting clinical privileges or employment, affiliation, or licensure decisions.

For more information on the NPDB and the HIPDB, see the *Fact Sheet on the National Practitioner Data Bank* and the *Fact Sheet on the Healthcare Integrity and Protection Data Bank*.

Fee and Payment Information

Fees are charged for all queries processed by the Data Banks. The query fee is based on the cost of processing requests and providing information to eligible entities. If an entity has registered for both the NPDB and the HIPDB and has selected the option to query both Data Banks (in the Query Options section of the on-line *Entity Registration* form), each query will be processed against both Data Banks and assessed the current fee for each Data Bank. A registered entity with querying authority for both Data Banks can elect to search only a single Data Bank by submitting an on-line *Entity Update* form and completing the Query Options section. To access the *Entity Update* form, the entity's administrator must access the IQRS and select **Update Registration Profile** from the *Administrator Options* screen.

The fee is levied on a per-name basis. When multiple-name queries are submitted, the number of names in the query is multiplied by the per-name fee. Fees are subject to change; changes are announced by the Secretary of HHS in the *Federal Register*. Query fees are based on the date of receipt at the NPDB-HIPDB.

A practitioner, provider, or supplier may submit a self-query to the NPDB-HIPDB at any time. **All self-query applications must be submitted through the NPDB-HIPDB Web site and a formatted copy, which is signed and notarized, must be mailed to the Data Banks.** All individual self-query requests are automatically sent to both the NPDB and the HIPDB. Organization self-queries are sent only to the HIPDB. For more information on self-querying the Data Banks, see the *Fact Sheet on Self-Querying*.

The act of submitting a query to the NPDB-HIPDB is considered an agreement to pay the associated fee. A fee is assessed when a query is:

- Processed by the NPDB, the HIPDB, or both Data Banks, whether or not there is information on file regarding a subject.
- Rejected by the NPDB, the HIPDB, or both Data Banks because it is improperly completed or lacks required information.

The NPDB-HIPDB accepts payment by credit card (VISA, MasterCard, Discover, or American Express) or pre-authorized Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). All self-queries must be paid with an accepted credit card.

An entity's administrator may save credit card information for entity users to use for query payments, or the user may choose to enter the credit card number, expiration date, cardholder's name, and cardholder's billing address on the appropriate screen when creating each query. If credit card information is denied, entities should contact the credit card company for the reason of denial.

If the entity wishes to establish an EFT, the entity's administrator selects the option to **Authorize Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT)** on the *Administrator Options* screen. The administrator then provides his or her entity's information and completes the certification on the *EFT Authorization* screen. The administrator prints two copies of the formatted *EFT Authorization*, signs and dates one copy, attaches a voided check (that reflects the account and routing number provided on the *EFT Authorization*), then mails it to the address specified on the formatted copy. The administrator should retain the second copy for the entity's records.

The NPDB-HIPDB must receive and process the formatted EFT authorization before EFT payments can begin. Once the formatted copy has been submitted, the NPDB-HIPDB will set up electronic communications with the entity's bank. This process takes up to 2 weeks; the entity will receive notification via the *Data Bank Correspondence* screen when the EFT authorization is activated. Query charges will then be deducted automatically from the entity's designated EFT account. To avoid disruption in service to your EFT account, immediately notify the Data Banks of all changes to your EFT account. Individuals performing a self-query may not use an EFT account for payment.

To view electronic query billing history, select View Billing History on the *Options* screen. If the Bill Status column reads "In Billing" or "Billing Dept," call the NPDB-HIPDB Customer Service Center for assistance.

Fee Structure

For registered entities and agents acting on their behalf, the fee for querying the NPDB-HIPDB is \$4.75 per subject, per Data Bank. Self-queries are assessed an \$8.00 fee for each Data Bank. Self-queries automatically search both the NPDB and the HIPDB for a total charge of \$16.00. Organization self-queries are sent only to the HIPDB, and therefore are assessed an \$8.00 fee. Self-query fees must be paid with an accepted credit card. For more information on self-queries, see the *Fact Sheet on Self-Querying*.

NPDB-HIPDB Assistance

If you suspect that your bill is incorrect, or if you need more information about a transaction on your bill, please write to us as soon as possible. We must hear from you no later than 60 days after you submitted the query on which the error or problem appeared. You may submit a letter or print and complete the *Account Discrepancy* form, available on-line at www.npdb-hipdb.hrsa.gov. If you submit a letter, your letter must provide the following information:

- Your name and credit card or EFT account number.
- The dollar amount of the suspected error.
- A description of the error and explanation of why you believe there is an error.
- The Data Bank Control Number (DCN) of the self-query or transaction in question.
- Your entity's and/or agent's Data Bank Identification (DBID) number (not applicable if a self-query).
- Your telephone number.
- Your signature.
- A copy of your bill.

For additional information, visit the NPDB-HIPDB Web site at www.npdb-hipdb.hrsa.gov. If you need assistance, contact the NPDB-HIPDB Customer Service Center by e-mail at npdb-hipdb@sra.com or by phone at 1-800-767-6732 (TDD 703-802-9395). Information Specialists are available to speak with you weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. (5:30 p.m. on Fridays) Eastern Time. The NPDB-HIPDB Customer Service Center is closed on all Federal holidays.